6/27/72

Dear Howard,

I write this while I can, before going to bed. I will not mail it in the a.m. because I think it would be better if your position is fully decided before you get it. After you have done or not done what you will or will do your mind may be a bit more at ease. I did feel I had to write Mary and the marked part of the carbon I sent you when I mailed other things tonight indicates why. I'll pick that up after an explanation.

Mary is exceedingly bright, can be quite cunning and says so, is very conservative, and has done an enormous amount of work. She is one of a trio of Dallas researchers who have been abused by most of those for lack of a better word called "liberals", all those in the L.A. area who were ever incontact with her Including financially), Garrison, Boxley, and others; and imposed upon by young people who just lived on her. The other two are more conservative than she. Her husband Buck says he is a Minuteman. These personal details are for your understanding only. They are nobody else's business. I don't think I have met any two people who have been any kinder to me and few whose word I'd depend upon more. Politics was never any problem between us once she decided to see for herself how venomous my poison was. We have been good friends since.

When she got the letter of which I sent you a copy she must have phoned me immediately. It was something after half past six our time, an hour earlier there, and I guess she'd just gotten home from work. She is secretary to a partner of one of the more prestigeous Dallas law firms.

There have had a series of indescribable personal tragedies in her family of which she had been told I would be informed. I had not been. There is no point in allocating blame further than I did in the letter you have. Her oldest son is ruined for life as the result of an accident he almost didn't survive, with a number of organs now missing, some permanently damaged, etc. Atop all this her daughter is about to have kidney surgery nad she is going there to tend her and the two children. Her husband has been in and out of the hospital for a number of medical reasons. Now I understand why she has been silent. And she now understands why I wrote as I did.

In the course of the conversation she told me of Ross Ralston's visit. I am certain he told us when I drove him to the bus that he would not have time when he got to Minneapolis to speak to Gary but would when he could return there from his home not far away in about two months. I am positive he said he had to return home, couldn't wait over, etc.What he did is hotfoot it to Dallas and introduce himself to Mary as a good friend of mine and as having just worked with the CTIA (which she has been quitting for a year and just hasn't gotten to it) for a week. So, when he used my name, she let him have access to everything she has. I never saw the kid until the day before he came up. I saw him then, briefly, in the CTIA office after I took Lil to the dentist, as you will recall, when I went there to talk to Jim Lesar about the May habeas corpus. My only earlier contact was when his mother, wife of a physician, wrote and ordered the books for him, then asked me if I could put him in touch with others, and I did, with Gary. Later Gary reported sort of negatively, that he didn't seem to work much, something like that. Until he wrote that he was coming to work with the CTIA, I didn't hear from him. This hardly justifies a self-introduction as my good friend. And when I add the fact that he was going to Minneapolis when he left here and instead went directly to Dallas, I have to have questions. It can, of course, be innocent, but with all the other things going one I'm reluctant to without more reason.

Mary heard from Sylvia week before last, but Sylvia said nothing about Wecht. In fact, even the possibility was unknown to Mary, who doesn't even know the provisions of the contract. She and SM have been close in the past. SM went there year before last and stayed with her. They were together with whatever they were into with Lifton, and sold together. And unsold. I do not know the details, didn't ask them.

Not from anything she said as much as what I'd have expected her to say that she didn't I got the idea that she had cooled on Sylvia a bit. I may be wrong. There is one thing she volunteered that I think you should regard as confidential. She said she believes Sylvia is the loneliest peron (or woman, I'm not certain which) she has ever met. This, assuredly,

is no crime. She was making no accusation. I don't know but I now wonder if she was giving me some kind of warning I didn t detect (I think it not probably but not impossible). And I think we should be thinking if this can be an explanation for the seemingly incredible. You have to be aware, for example, that Sylvia's position on my rights to my material are quite contradictory to her boasting, proclamations, lectures, whatever you want to style them, and her record, to the best of my knowledge, with other people's material and with me. You will recall that when I wrote her last week I chided her on this (and no word from her, Gary or Jerry to now, well after 10 p.m.)

I had to give her a bit more of an explanation than was in the letter for writing it. Of you I told her that Sylvia had been leaning hard on you. Of the attacks on me I said nothing and you'll remember in the letter I said they'd have to await the future, that I am confident she ll know in time.

Aside from the Ross thing as an isolated thing, my purpose in writing is to ask you to consider telling her whatever you think you can of these attacks on me and this theft of my material. Especially the accusations of selfishness, secretiveness, anything along that line. You see, Mary has copies of some of my files I've never even read. She knows how fee I am and spent a long weekend here regularly giving me hell about it. My reason is not my own defense. That bothers me little. It may trigger something in Mary, and too many things that xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx shouldn t have happened have all come at one time. You will never sit on a tack as sharp as Mary, and she is dependable in her judgement of people. She has lived a hard life, has had to use wiles and sure as hell still can - and does. The decision is yours. If you decline, ok. If you want to edit, ok. If you want to reword, fine, too. If you tell her it has to be in confidence except for you or perhaps you and me, depend on it, there will be no way of getting it from her. She hates Lifton now, but will not mention his material, whatever it is.

This combination of circumstances beginning with Ned and up to Ross is a bit too much. There is one thing that may be irrelevant and at most coincidence. Jerry says he has not gotten some letters I have sent him. I do not believe he is lying. There is no such complaint with any other or from any other, and the only other mail that has in any way been delayed is from Ray. That is understandable. Today, for example, I got two letters sent regular first class from California two days ago. That, certainly, is not delayed mail.

It sounds paranoid and I'm not presenting it as fact. But note these coincidences: Gary, Ned, Ross and a vast intelligence operation are all Minneapolis. I was shadowed openly there, the only time ever. My bagge was treated as you know. If it does not likely have any meaning, at this point I'm not going to say it can't. I just don't know and too much I never expected has happened. I never expected such behavior and attitudes from Sylvia, for example. And you know how I was speaking of her as recently as less than two weeks ago. And you knew of things of which I was nonetheless aware. I am also aware that a certain amount of this odd feeling can be attributed to a subconscious reaction to my own misjudgement of people. I am not, by the way, implying that Gary is any kind of spy.

I have not had a chance to think this through. We were ready to eat when Mary phoned. Lil's sister phoned before we finished. I talked to her long xxx about the problem you know of with her son, and I wrote the letter to Mary when Lil continued it. I seem to have made real progress with the boy. Not with his problems, but with him, his attitudes, reactions and behavior. Lil has remained with a severe headache through all of this business. As soon as she finished talking to her sister I had to take her to a friend she is helping with a bookkeeping problem, went to the post office at the same time, and on getting home she went to bed and I started this. So, understand this is off the top of the head except for one thing: when I was talking to Mary and she said Sylvia had not at any time told her of the coming Wecht thing when it has been in the works for close to a year I decided to make the foregoing suggestion to you. My fear boils down to the possibility of something up and undetected. I don't give a dman what Sylvia says about me to anyone. This will all be after the fact of whatever she & co. do. And after the fact, I'd welcome any comment you might care to make on rationality.

Sincerely,